



Public Safety Communications Highlights

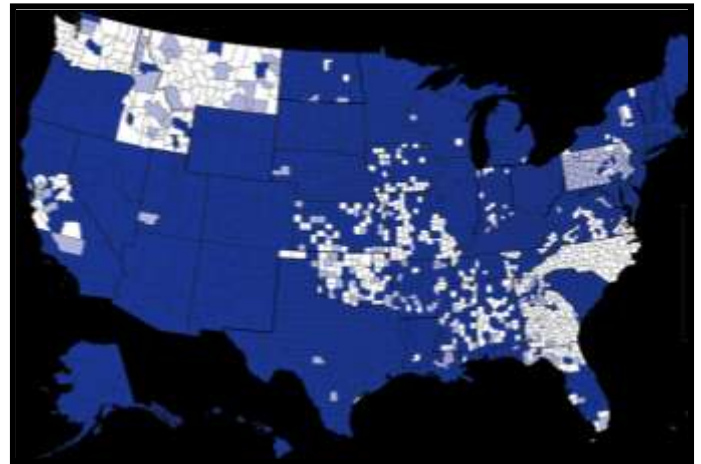
- According to Dorothy Gremaux, 9-1-1 Supervisor and E9-1-1 Coordinator for the Central Montana 9-1-1 Center, its new radio system is scheduled to deploy on statewide trunking next week. All equipment is installed and stable. Radios in the dispatch center are being installed this week and testing has proven to be great. She also indicated that it has been a pleasure to work with Roger Hayes, Motorola, and the Industrial Communications technicians on another major project. Everyone is looking forward to using the system.
- On Feb. 29, MHP closed its bid process for a full-sized snowcat that will be used for winter communications site access.

National Emergency Communication Plan: Goal # 2

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) has established a vision for emergency communications in the United States. The National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP) includes three goals to establish a baseline level of interoperable emergency communications during routine, day-to-day incidents and for responses to large-scale disasters. Goal # 2 focuses on the demonstration of response-level emergency communications by all counties or communities during day-to-day or routine incidents and states that: "By 2011, 75 percent of all non-urban jurisdictions are able to demonstrate response-level emergency communications within one hour for routine events involving multiple jurisdictions and agencies." The complete document may be found at this [link](#).

DHS requires each state to report on interoperability data collected at the county level. As part of the process, states have been asked to assess each of their counties' ability to demonstrate response-level emergency communications. Click [here](#) for a copy of the county performance survey. If you have not already done so, please fill it out to the best of your ability and email the completed form to [E. Wing Spooner](#). This data is needed as soon as possible, since it was due in the fall of 2011.

When viewing the national map below that displays tracking of NECP Goal # 2 reporting, the reader can see that Montana is woefully behind on its reporting. The lack of reporting has put at risk Montana's ability to secure workshops, training, and technical assistance from OEC. Your help is needed. Please fill out and submit your county performance survey ASAP!



Time to Check Mutual Aid Permits

Montana has an outstanding Mutual Aid and Common Frequencies program that is a model across the country. The Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) established by responder groups over the years as well as the frequencies available to first responder organizations have served as a valuable asset to the citizens of Montana.

Both Montana's Mutual Aid program and Federal Communication Commission (FCC) require entities to hold a valid Mutual Aid Frequency Permit if they want to legally use this spectrum. The State of Montana currently licenses all mutual aid frequencies in the state. Under FCC regulations, the state may issue permits to allow authorized users to utilize the mutual aid spectrum according to federal regulations and the SOPs outlined in the Montana Mutual Aid and Common Frequencies Manual. When the 2011 edition of the manual was published, new General Use and Fire Mutual Aid frequencies were added. Agencies are required to apply for permits to legally utilize this new spectrum. Permits issued are good for five years, unless revoked.

A review of permits late last year revealed a number of expired ones. In addition, many valid permits had inadequate contact information.

HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

Renewal notifications were set by email to organizations that had a valid email address in their applications, but the Public Safety Services Bureau (PSSB) received very few responses.

You can assist in making sure your agency's permits are current and that you are operating in accordance with FCC and State of Montana requirements. Mutual Aid Permits may be viewed and printed from this web link: <https://app.mt.gov/mutualaid/>. If your permit is expired or needs updating, links on this page will allow you to modify an existing permit or request a new one. PSSB staff will review applications for consistency with SOPs and will either approve the submittal or make modifications prior to approval.

When modifying and applying for permits, agencies can do several things to reduce questions and make the process more efficient.

1. Permits applications should be agency specific (i.e. County Sheriff's Department, EMS transporter, or XYZ Fire Department) or part of an established service-related program (XYZ County Fire Council, Drug Enforcement Task Force, etc.). Generic county or regional "all encompassing" permits will no longer be approved because they do not meet the legal or program intent.
2. Permit approvals will be based on the Mutual Aid and Common frequencies SOP. Law enforcement, fire services, EMS and other agencies have invested many resources and much planning time over the years to create this program. The Mutual Aid Permit system protects this investment. Approvals will be made based on the specific intent of frequency resources.

If you have questions regarding the mutual aid and common frequency permitting process, please contact [Julia Noland](#) (406-444-0162) or [Scott Bradford](#) (406-444-2782).

You also may want to explore the new PSSB frequency management website located at: <http://pssb.mt.gov/frequencies.mcp.x>. The site provides links to the Montana Mutual Aid and Common Frequencies Manual, the Mutual Aid Frequencies Online Permit Request Service, information about narrowbanding as well as a link to the 700 MHz Regional Planning and Broadband Initiatives site.



Intermittent Signal Loss Mitigated on Ft. Harrison Tower

In an effort to solve problematic signal reliability issues at the Montana Highway Patrol (MHP) dispatch center, crews relocated a 400-lb, 8-foot high-performance microwave dish from an 80-foot height on the Ft. Harrison tower to a 58-foot height earlier this week.

Although the tower originally underwent an engineering structural analysis before the dish was installed at the 80-foot height, strong winds resulted in the tower swaying, which, in turn, caused the dish to lose its alignment. This created significant signal loss and system reliability problems.

"Re-location of the dish went very smoothly," said Dale Osborne, MHP Lead Communications Technician. "When the dishes were re-aligned, we did discover that the old path was very much out of alignment."

Since this microwave link provides connectivity to the MHP dispatch center, it was essential that the path be improved for greater reliability. A microwave path analysis was performed to determine alternative locations for the dish, and the 58-foot height was found to be viable.

Dunne Communications performed the work and provided the photos!



BEFORE



AFTER

HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

Free Assistance to Rural Law Enforcement

SEARCH, the National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics, is offering free assistance to rural law enforcement or tribal jurisdictions nationwide. Since Montana is considered a "rural" state, several opportunities for free training and technical assistance are available to help tackle information sharing challenges.

SEARCH received funding from the "FY 2009 Recovery Act Assistance to Rural Law Enforcement Grant" to help justice and public safety practitioners succeed with information sharing projects and initiatives through effective and efficient use of appropriate technology.

Funding is available to help additional rural jurisdictions. Apply online at this link: <http://www.search.org/products/ta/>.

Upcoming Meetings

- **Tues., March 13: Statewide Interoperability Governing Board (SIGB)**

Helena • 10:00 am - noon
State Capitol, Room 152

http://itsd.mt.gov/policy/councils/sigb/03132012_meeting.mcp

- **Thurs. - Fri., March 15 and/or 16: Homeland Security Exercise & Evaluation Program (HSEEP) Training**

Billings • 8:00 am - 5:00 pm daily
Fire Station #1, 2300 9th Ave. North

Note: These are two one-day sessions.

March 15 is an overview on Exercise Design and the HSEEP Toolkit. March 16 focuses on Exercise Design with a practicum.

Contact: Lindsey Shafer, HSEEP Coordinator, DES; lshafer@mt.gov or 406-324-478

- **Tues., March 20: SIGB Technical Working Group**

Billings • 1:00 - 4:30 pm
Location to be Announced

- **Tues., March 20: Montana Chapter APCO Meeting**

Helena • 9:00 am - 1:00 pm
MT Law Enforcement Academy
Classrooms 204 & 205
2260 Sierra Road East

